Melting of Himalayan Glaciers

2790. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Himalayan Glaciers are having cracks and are rapidly melting;

(b) if so, whether there is any possibility of floods and evalaunching of snow on the mountains which would affect the large population;

(c) how far such melting and evalaunching of snow shall have adverse affects on the rivers particularly in Northern India; and

(d) the steps being proposed to be taken for the protection of the public and the agricultural fields?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The studies carried out by Geological Survey of India have revealed that the Himalayan Glaciers, like any other glaciers in the world, have cracks. Such cracks are result of the various forces acting on the glaciers and not necessarily due to the melting of the glaciers alone. However, it is also true that Himalayan Glaciers are passing through a phase of recession, which is a worldwide phenomenon. Such recession could also be attributed to the phenomenon of global warming.

(b) During winters, avalanching in the mountains is a common phenomenon which is not related to the development of cracks and melting of the glaciers. As far as glaciers are concerned, majority of glaciers in Himalaya are located in very remote areas where no population resides and therefore are not a threat. The marginal increase in the river discharge due to melting of glaciers may not lead to heavy floods in the rivers affecting population.

(c) Melting of glaciers may cause marginal rise in the water discharge of rivers in Northern India. However, as this process is very slow, it may not have any major adverse affect on the rivers.

(d) The measures taken to reduce the recession of glaciers include conservation activities such as afforestation, removal of garbage, restrictions on human interference on glaciers and promotion of sustainable eco-tourism.